

RIDING THE RIGHT SEAT

Riding the Right Seat: An Acting Company Officer Training Program for the
McHenry Township Fire Protection District

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: _____

Abstract

The problem was that the McHenry Township Fire Protection District assigned members as acting company officers and did not provide training to prepare them for the assignment. This places the individual in a position where they are expected to perform without the benefit of the education and training to prepare them for success. The purpose of this Applied Research Project (ARP) was to develop a draft program and recommendations for an acting company officer training program. The action research method was utilized and a copy of the draft program is provided in the appendix. Research questions identified the need for acting company officer training, national and state standards, model programs, how other fire departments provide acting company officer training, and what the officers and firefighters of the McHenry Township Fire Protection District believe to be important elements of an acting company officer training program. The procedures used in this ARP included a literature review, collection of information and data, requests for programs from other fire departments, and both external and internal feedback instruments. The results identified model programs to use as a template as well as specific components to incorporate into the department's program. Both short and long term recommendations were developed including the review and possible implementation of the draft program included in appendix E.

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Introduction

Many believe that one of the biggest changes and challenges for an individual is when they become a first level supervisor. In the fire service this is frequently called “going from a blue shirt to a white shirt”. Numerous articles and textbooks from the fire service as well as other industries chronicle the successes as well as the failures of individuals attempting this step. Nowhere is this challenge greater than when an individual is assigned as an acting company officer, especially on an infrequent or occasional basis.

The problem is the McHenry Township Fire Protection District (MTFPD) assigns members as acting company officers and does not provide training to prepare them for the assignment. This places the individual in a position where they are expected to perform without the benefit of the education and training to prepare them for success. The purpose of this applied research project (ARP) is to develop an acting company officer training program for the MTFPD.

The action research method was used to answer the following research questions: a) why is acting company officer training necessary?, b) what are the national and state standards that apply to the position of acting company officer?, c) what types of acting company officer training programs are utilized by other fire departments?, d) what do the firefighters of the McHenry Township Fire Protection District believe to be important components of an acting company officer training program?, e) what do the officers of the McHenry Township Fire Protection District believe to be important components of an acting company officer training program?

The results of this research will be used to develop the draft for an acting company officer training program for the MTFPD.

Background and Significance

Located in northeastern Illinois, McHenry County is a rural/suburban area of 308,760 residents in an area of 603 square miles. Originally an agricultural area, it recorded an 23.6% increase in population between 2000 and 2007 (McHenry County Workforce Investment Board, 2008).

The McHenry Township Fire Protection District (MTFPD) is located in the northeastern portion of McHenry County. Organized as a special district in 1939, the district protects all of the City of McHenry, Village of Johnsburg, Village of McCullom Lake, Village of Ringwood, and Village of Holiday Hills as well as parts of the Village of Bull Valley, Village of Lakemoor, and the Village of Island Lake. Collectively the district consists of 58 square miles and a resident population of approximately 65,000. Its boundaries contain a wide range of occupancies and property uses. This includes a regional hospital, two high schools, a chemical manufacturing plant, boat marinas, and small entry-level to large upscale residential housing. The district is also diverse geographically including rural, suburban, heavy industry, miles of riverfront and even an island with summer homes. (A. Huemann, personal communication, May 26, 2011).

The MTFPD is a full service agency providing fire suppression, ALS transport, hazardous materials, specialized rescue and fire prevention, inspection, and investigation services. These services are provided by approximately 155 cross-trained part-time personnel who staff four fire stations. All personnel are certified firefighters and are also trained as either Emergency Medical Technicians or Paramedics.

Seven career Chief and administrative officers and two support personnel provide administrative direction and leadership to the department.

Each 24 hour day is divided into two, 12 hour shifts staffed by 12 firefighters and officers operating four, 3 person engine/ambulance “jump companies”. Since November 1, 2011 an additional three person engine company is in service each day from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the headquarters station.

Using a common fire service work cycle of three, 24 hour shifts, there are career Battalion Chiefs in charge of two of the shifts. These positions were added on September 6, 2011. The Acting Battalion Chief position on the remaining shift is filled by one of the departments 19 part-time Lieutenants and Captains. Other than the two Battalion Chiefs, all shift personnel are part-time. Between 2000 and 2010 the department experienced an average annual increase in alarm volume of 3.5% (MTFPD, 2011). In 2011 the department responded to 4978 alarms.

Part-time officers do not work a particular shift cycle but rather are required to work a minimum number of hours each quarter. The amount of hours varies based on whether they are an Emergency Medical Technician or Paramedic. Prior to the addition of the career Battalion Chiefs, the part-time officers would work either at the company officer or shift commander level. With the advent of the Battalion Chiefs they now work predominately at the company level.

Even with this change, for a significant number of shifts throughout a given month, the person in charge of a crew is a firefighter and not a promoted officer. This is due to many factors that impact the availability of the part-time officers including their full-time careers, family, and other commitments.

Traditionally the department has not had a formal designation or assignment for the individual in charge of the crew. The term acting officer has been used but without any formal criteria, expectations, or responsibilities assigned to this position. On a daily basis the Battalion Chief or Acting Battalion Chief is responsible to evaluate the personnel working that shift and determine who will be assigned as the acting company officer. While seniority, past experience, and interest play a role, daily staffing demands including the number of paramedics working and driver qualifications can impact who is available for assignment as the acting company officer for the crew. Through their own initiative many of the department's firefighters have sought coursework, seminars, and other training that would be of value to an acting company officer. Presently 27 of the departments 128 firefighters (21%) have completed the course work for Fire Officer I and are either fully or provisionally certified (J. Perkiser, personal communication, March 10, 2012).

The fire service as a whole is experiencing change in the role and expectations of company officers. This is no truer than within the MTFPD. The expectations of an officer, especially the non-emergency, non-incident related expectations have increased in recent years. This then places a corresponding increase to the challenges to those who function as acting company officers. The mission of the McHenry Township Fire Protection District is:

The McHenry Township Fire Protection District is dedicated to providing the highest level of fire and rescue services to the communities it serves, through the commitment, preparedness, continuing education and training of its most valuable assets, its members, who work to assure the safety of the District's citizens on a daily basis.

(MTFPD, 2011)

Providing training for the department's acting company officers is therefore consistent with the highest goals of the fire district's mission.

The development of an acting company officer training program also directly relates to the to the United States Fire Administration (USFA) 2010-2014 Strategic Plan, Goal 3: to improve the fire and emergency services capability for response to and recovery from all hazards, and Goal 4: to improve the fire and emergency services' professional status (USFA, 2010, p. 14). The goal of the Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP), *Executive Leadership* course is to "develop the ability to conceptualize and employ the key processes and interpersonal skills used by effective executive-level managers" (USFA, 2011, p. 7). Consistent with this philosophy is working to provide this same focus to lower ranking officers.

This ARP will establish a framework for the organization to address this important area. This research is significant to the organization in that in the future the department will continue to utilize acting company officers. Providing these individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to be effective in this assignment is therefore critical for both the individual and the organization. This will also assist in the long term goal of a comprehensive succession plan for the fire district.

The results of this research project will be incorporated into the MTFPD in two phases. The first will be elements of the draft in appendix E that will be recommended as a pilot program with department members who currently service as acting company officers. The second phase will be to submit further recommendations to the Fire Chief for possible review and adoption. Other organizations seeking to develop a similar training program may find value in both the research and recommendations.

Literature Review

The literature review was designed to gather information in the form of texts, magazine articles, formal reports, and local materials to answer the research questions.

Why is acting company officer training necessary?

The company officer fulfills a critical, demanding role within any fire department. According to Smoke (2010) “the company officer is the most influential member of the department and key to daily operations” (p. 5). The tasks and responsibilities of the company officer range from incident commander to mediator and from coach to public relations representative. Primary among these is working to ensure the safety of the firefighters assigned to them, to make sure that “everyone goes home”. Fulfilling this broad statement requires skill, knowledge, education, and experience in a wide range of areas from building construction to hazardous materials and from department policy to using computer software. Away from an emergency scene, and really at all times, the company officer serves as an important link between the firefighters and the higher ranks and administration. Further recognized is that frequently fire departments utilize some of their younger and inexperienced members in this role.

Writing in *Fire Engineering Magazine*, authors Robert Rielage and Todd Rielage (2007) identified an additional aspect that may not be present in career departments is that of the officer needing to be capable of switching from leading an engine crew on one call, to a ladder or rescue crew on the next. They also may be leading crews that are entirely different from one alarm to the next. In addition they may be required to fill a variety of command positions including Incident Commander, Safety Officer, or Public Information Officer.

In the March 2001 issue of *Fire Rescue Magazine*, James O. Page (2001) wrote about the importance of the company officer. This included that company officers are the only ones with a

24 hour, around-the-clock ability to influence department members. This also places the officer in the best position to motivate, teach, and inspire. Page further identified that in volunteer or part-time departments, the officer may not have the benefit of a consistent group of individuals to lead.

Beyond the fire service, when examining supervisor training within the federal government, Thompson (2007) identified that for the majority of federal employees their most relevant leadership is that provided by the first line supervisor. Due to their direct contact with the employee, first line supervisors had a larger impact on the day to day operations of the agency than did supervisors higher in the organization. Speaking further to the importance of the first line supervisor, Thompson referenced a 2004 Corporate Leadership Council Study that stated “there is a high correlation between employee engagement and the extent to which the employee’s immediate supervisor:

1. clearly articulates organizational goals
2. sets realistic performance expectations
3. adapts to changing circumstances”

(Thompson, 2007, p. 3).

A second report on supervisors in the federal government pointed out the critical role that first-line supervisors have. The report identifies that they are faced with greater spans of control, increasing public demands, changing generational values, and the employees need to balance work and family (U.S. Office of Personnel Management [USOPM], 2001).

Another aspect illustrating the need for officer training is the potential of organizational liability. The concept of training commensurate to duties is found in both federal and NFPA

standards. While it appears that the legal cases as of yet have been more prevalent within law enforcement, it is reasonable to also consider its application to the fire service. (Murphy, 2011).

National and state standards

The nationally accepted standard for company officer is published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Specifically, NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*, outlines the job performance requirements (JPR) for four different levels of fire officers. Fire Officer I is considered the supervisory level, and would be applicable to company officers. The higher levels of Fire Officer II, III, and IV then correspond to the supervisory/managerial, managerial/administrative and administrative levels. At the Fire Officer I level the standard identifies the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) required of a company level officer. The standard identifies KSAs in seven areas:

1. General
2. Human resource management
3. Community and government relations
4. Administration
5. Inspection and investigation
6. Emergency service delivery
7. Health and safety

(NFPA, 2009).

Two other NFPA standards make reference to the training and qualifications for company officers. NFPA 1500, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program* is a comprehensive document that addresses a wide range of areas. Specifically, chapter 5.1.1, Training, Education and Professional states “the fire department shall provide training,

education, and professional development program for all department members commensurate with the duties and functions that they are expected to perform” (NFPA, 2007, p. 12).

Additional requirements include that the fire department develops training curriculums that meet the requirements of the NFPA professional standard pertaining to that member’s assigned function. For company officer this would be the NFPA 1021 standard.

The other standard, NFPA 1561, *Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System*, identifies the necessity of supervisory personnel to be trained for their role in the Incident Management System, including the ability to assume initial command of an incident until a higher ranking officer arrives. (NFPA, 2008, p. 18).

Further reference to nationally accepted standards and practices is found in the *Officer Development Handbook* developed by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC, 2010). Incorporating NFPA standard 1021, *Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*, the handbook outlines the training and development for four levels of fire officer. The recommendations outlined in the handbook are organized as four components: learning, education, experience, and self-development. The training component involves professional training and certification while the education component deals with higher level formal education. The experience component focuses on opportunities to practice skills and gain experience in several different areas. The self-development component is accomplished through varied activities appropriate to each level. The supervising fire officer level (Fire Officer I) would correspond to assignment as an acting company officer. The training element at this level identifies the completion of specific elements including Firefighter II, Fire Officer I, Incident Safety Officer, and Hazardous Materials. The education component identifies course work in eleven areas: communications, business, science, psychology, sociology, math, computers, health/wellness, government, human resources, and the

fire service. The experience component recommends three to five years as a qualified responder or firefighter as well as a minimum of 200 hours of functioning as an acting officer. The objectives in this area include incident management, planning, instruction, and coaching. The fourth area, self-development includes ten areas ranging from participation in a physical fitness program, to career mapping, and practicing effective communications skills. (IAFC, 2010).

A relatively new program that also incorporates the NPFA standards is the Fire Officer designation that is offered through the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE). The organization has offered the Chief Fire Officer designation program for several years and has now extended it to the company officer level.

Designed to recognize achievement and provide for continued development of the fire officer, the program includes three steps of application, review, and designation. The application step consists of the following elements:

- Personal and employment information
- Letters of reference
- Documentation of professional development including:
 - Education
 - Certifications
 - Training and courses
 - Development goals
- Professional contributions
- Professional memberships, affiliations, and community involvement
- Technical competencies

The technical competencies evaluated encompass 12 specific areas ranging from human resources and incident reporting to fire prevention and company operations. Once the assembled application information or portfolio is submitted a team of peer reviewers review the information, determine if the criteria is met, conduct an oral interview with the candidate, and make a recommendation regarding the candidate's eligibility. This peer review process takes approximately 30-45 days to accomplish. Successful candidates are then awarded the designation of Fire Officer. This designation is valid for a period of three years upon which the individual must then reapply. (Center for Public Safety Excellence [CPSE], n.d.).

In summary, the literature review identified the need for training and education to be provided for acting company officers. Both promoted officers and acting officers are held responsible for a wide range of activities on a daily basis. Further, how they are prepared and how they execute these responsibilities has a direct impact on the performance of the firefighters in the crew.

A review of the national standards as well as the model programs available from the IAFC and the CPSE provide additional information for developing and implementing programs.

Procedures

This applied research paper was formatted and written based on the 5th edition of the American Psychological Association *Publication Manual*. The action research method was used to answer the following research questions: a) why is acting company officer training necessary?, b) what are the national and state standards that apply to the position of acting company officer?, c) what types of acting company officer training programs are utilized by other fire departments?, d) what do the firefighters of the McHenry Township Fire Protection District believe to be important components of an acting company officer training program?, e) what do the officers of

the McHenry Township Fire Protection District believe to be important components of an acting company officer training program?

The research methodology had two components. The first involved a literature review of articles, texts, and reports related to the role and importance of company officers and a review of national and state standards. This provided information for answering questions 1 and 2.

The second involved soliciting information from other fire departments on a nation-wide basis, internal and external feedback instruments, and a review of local materials. This provided information for answering questions 3,4 and 5.

Research for part one began at the National Fire Academy located in Emmitsburg, Maryland during July 2011. An electronic search of the resources of the Learning Resource Center (LRC) provided several sources including magazine articles and previous Executive Fire Officer Program Applied Research Projects. Additional research was conducted at the Gail Borden Public Library located in Elgin, Illinois, the McHenry Public Library located in McHenry, Illinois and the researcher's personal library.

Electronic research was conducted via the internet utilizing the Google search engine (www.google.com). The search terms included company officer, acting officer, officer development and first line supervisor.

Utilizing the online card catalog of the LRC (<http://www.lrc.dhs.gov/index.html>) several Applied Research Projects on the topics of acting officer, officer development, and succession planning were located and downloaded.

Research for part two focused on gathering information from other fire departments and within the MTFPD. To obtain examples and information related to the acting company officer training programs used by other fire departments, a request for information was sent in

December 2011 utilizing the United States Fire Administration's Training, Resources and Data Exchange Network (TRADENET). TRADENET is a weekly email sponsored by the National Fire Academy and provides a forum for fire service professionals to request and exchange information. At the time of the request, TRADENET had 39,324 worldwide subscribers to the weekly email. (USFA, personal communication, March 15, 2012).

To further obtain information from other fire departments, an external feedback instrument was developed using the Survey Monkey Website (www.surveymonkey.com). This was distributed in December 2011 and consisted of 13 questions that included the closed, open, and forced choice formats and was distributed through TRADENET. The potential group size to receive the feedback instrument was 39,324 (USFA, personal communication, March 15, 2012). The feedback instrument instructions indicated that only non-identifiable information was being collected but provided the option to provide contact information, including the ability to request a copy of the final ARP.

To gain the insight and opinion of the officers and firefighters of the MTFPD, two additional feedback instruments were developed and separately distributed in December 2011 through the department's computer intranet system. Both the officer and the firefighter instruments consisted of questions that included the closed, open, and forced choice formats. The instructions indicated that only non-identifiable information was being collected and provided the opportunity to include additional comments. The potential group size for the officer feedback instrument was 26 and the potential audience for the firefighter feedback instrument was 128.

There were limitations to the research. The research focused on departments that currently have a training program for acting company officers. The construction of the external

feedback instrument may have limited the amount of information provided by those fire departments that believe they have need for a program, but do not currently have one. Further the internal feedback instrument sent to MTFPD firefighters had only a 37.5% return rate. Possibly a higher return rate may have been achieved with a longer time period or additional personal requests by the researcher.

The following terms are defined to clarify their meaning:

Acting Company Officer : A firefighter assigned on an occasional basis to supervise a crew of two or three other MTFPD firefighters.

Executive Fire Officer Program: A four year program offered to Chief level officers at the National Fire Academy (NFA) in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Completion of the program requires attendance at the NFA for two weeks each year as well as completion of an ARP after each course.

Lieutenant: A first level supervisor responsible for a specific crew at a MTFPD fire station. Lieutenant's also function as Acting Battalion Chiefs and are assigned additional program or team responsibilities within the department.

National Fire Academy: Part of the United States Fire Administration, the National Fire Academy is a residential campus offering professional development courses to the fire service. The NFA is located in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

National Fire Protection Association: A non-profit world-wide organization and developer of more than 300 consensus standards and codes.

National Fire Protection Association Standard 1021: The professional standard outlining the minimum job performance requirements (JPR) for fire officers. The standard is revised every five years with the current edition issued in 2009.

National Fire Protection Association Standard 1500: The standard outlining the minimum requirements for a fire service related occupational safety and health program. The standard is revised every five years with the current edition issued in 2007.

National Fire Protection Association Standard 1561: The standard outlining the minimum requirements for an incident management system to be used by emergency services to manage all emergency incidents. The standard is revised every five years with the current edition issued in 2008.

Results

The purpose of this applied research project was to research and develop a draft program and recommendations for a training program for acting company officers. This section will report the results of the data and information collected for the study.

Research question 1. Why is acting company officer training necessary? The literature review provided the information for answering this question. Both fire service as well as other literature emphasize the importance of the first-level supervisor. The responsibilities of the supervisor or company officer is increasing as are the demands placed upon the position. It was also identified that those who serve as officers in volunteer or part-time fire departments have added challenges of having to supervise crews that can change with every alarm and also needing to be qualified to lead different types of crews, i.e. engine, truck, or squad. Also identified was the potential for legal liability for failure to train supervisors.

As part of the research to illustrate the need for acting officer training within the MTFPD, the shift schedules for the six month period of September 6, 2011 to March 6, 2012 was reviewed. Specifically reviewed were the eight officer positions (nine since November 1, 2011) that exist within each 24 hour day, and how many of those positions were filled by promoted

officers versus acting officers. This particular date range was selected to coincide with the advent of a daily roster form prepared by the Battalion Chiefs that identifies who is assigned to each officer position. Prior to September 6, 2011 this information was not readily tracked. A total of 183 days where the daily roster form was prepared were reviewed. The results of this review are shown in table 1:

Period	Percent of time a promoted officer is assigned to crew	Percent of time an acting company officer is assigned to crew
September 6- October 6	25.5%	74.4%
October 7 – November 6	19.6%	80.3%
November 7 – December 6	20.7%	79.2%
December 7 – January 6	23.3%	76.6%
January 7 – February 6	25.3%	74.6%
February 7 – March 6	23.5%	75.2%
6 month average	22.9%	76.6%

Table 1

Comparison of promoted officers to acting company officers

It should be noted that on days where a particular crew was split between some hours covered by a promoted officer and some covered by an acting officer, a judgment was made by the researcher as to which category this would be counted in.

Research question 2. What are the national and state standards that apply to the position of acting company officer?

The research indicated that the nationally accepted standard for fire officers is NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*. The JPRs identified for the Fire Officer I level would apply to the assignment of an acting company officer in the MTFPD. Two other NFPA standards, 1500 and 1561 provide further guidance on the training needs of company officers.

The model program detailed in the IAFC *Officer Development Handbook* provides a plan for translating the NFPA professional standard into a comprehensive program for company officer development. In addition, the CPSE Fire Officer designation program offers additional, standard based, guidance of the professional development of the fire officer.

The Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) has responsibility for the certification of fire officers. Based on the NFPA 1021 standard, OSFM has developed curriculums and certification programs for three levels of officer certification. Fire Officer I is equivalent to a company officer. (OSFM, 2007). Certification at this level requires a combination of fire service education and experience. The education component consists of five, 40 hour courses:

1. Management I
2. Management II
3. Tactics and Strategy I

4. Instructor I

5. Fire Prevention Principles

(OSFM, 2012).

The experience component consists of two elements. The first is having attained a minimum of four years of current fire suppression experience. The second is fulfilled by functioning in the company officer role for a minimum of one year. If an individual is not a promoted officer a department can either develop their own field experience program, including required hours, or utilize a state established guideline. The state guideline considers the attainment of 2304 hours of acting officer time as having fulfilled the one year experience requirement (OSFM, 2007).

At the local level the MTFPD job description for Lieutenant was reviewed. The prerequisites for promotion to Lieutenant include five years as a member of the MTFPD and completion of all phases of the officer testing process. Once promoted, new Lieutenants are required to attain state certification as a Fire Officer I within two years from their promotion date. Specifically, the job description lists 11 areas of responsibility for a Lieutenant:

1. Safety
2. Incident command
3. Training/instruction
4. Tool and equipment maintenance
5. Apparatus maintenance
6. Station maintenance
7. Discipline
8. Projecting a positive image of the MTFPD
9. Attending officer meetings and training

10. Assisting with budget

11. Additional tasks assigned by the Fire Chief

(MTFPD, 2010).

Research question 3. What types of acting company officer training programs are utilized by other fire departments? A request for information sent through TRADENET as well a second request containing an internet link to an external feedback instrument provided the main source of information for this research question. There was also direct phone contact with some of the fire departments. A total of 12 fire departments representing seven states provided copies of their acting company officer or company officer training programs. The names of the departments are listed in appendix A.

Each program reviewed had their own particular aspects, but there were several common areas. The five most common components identified were:

1. Minimum requirements or criteria
2. Taskbook
3. Mentoring
4. Formal coursework
5. Testing

The requirements to enter into the training program include a minimum number of years experience, certain certifications, completion of coursework, and satisfactory performance evaluations. Some programs also required an entrance exam and one department required an oral interview as part of their process.

The use of a task book which included checklists for specific tasks and activities was very common. While they all varied in terms of complexity, they commonly included a mixture

of department specific items as well as additional coursework such as National Incident Management System courses. Most were also correlated to the NFPA 1021 standard.

It was common to find required tasks in both administrative and emergency incident related areas and a requirement that each task be demonstrated a minimum number of times.

Examples of tasks included:

- Incident scene size up
- Conducting company level training sessions
- Conducting fire inspections
- Completing daily records and reports, including incident reports
- Demonstrating various types of radio communications
- Conducting real or simulated employee coaching sessions

The assignment of a mentor and the use of ride-along time was also common. Most programs included check off sheets to be completed by both the mentor and the student. The amount of time that was dedicated to the mentor process ranged from two to ten duty shifts.

Formal coursework was a component in some programs and included both college level and courses toward state certification as a fire officer. The testing component found in some programs included written, practical, and simulator exercises. One department also required a final oral interview at the end of the training program.

Some programs presented additional interesting aspects. This included the training being required for promotional testing, continuing education requirements to remain qualified, and a requirement to design and implement a department project as part of the training program. Also found were set deadlines for completing the training program. This ranged from four to 18 months.

An external feedback instrument was also used to provide additional information. A total of 130 responses were received during the allotted two week period. The following is a summary of the most chosen response(s) to each question.

Feedback instrument question #1 What is your rank?

40.8% answered Lieutenant/Captain/Company Officer

Feedback instrument question #2 What type of department do you represent?

53.8% answered career department

Feedback instrument question #3 How many members does your department have?

37.7% answered 50-100 members

Feedback instrument question #4 Does your department use Acting Officers at the company level?

89.2% answered yes

Feedback instrument question #5 If yes, does the department provide training for Acting Officers?

62.8% answered yes

Feedback instrument question #6 If there is a program, do you believe that it is beneficial to your department?

Of those who have a program 88.3% answered yes

Feedback instrument question #7 If there is not a training program, do you believe that your department would benefit from one?

Of those who do not have a program 95% answered yes

Feedback instrument question #8 If a training program is provided is it done (when is it done)?

Of those who have a program, 50% answered prior to assignment as an acting officer. An additional 46% of those with programs answered that the training is provided both before and after assignment as an acting officer

Feedback instrument question #9 Is the training program voluntary or required?

Of those with a program 72% answered that the training is required

Feedback instrument question #10 If your department provides training for Acting Officers what does it consist of?

This write-in question was answered by 73 of the respondents (56% of total respondents). The top five components identified were:

1. State certification classes and/or NIMS classes
2. Task book
3. Tactical scenarios
4. Classroom
5. Mentor

Feedback instrument question #11 In your opinion, what topics should be included in a training program for Acting Officers?

There were 22 possible responses to this question. The top 5 most chosen answers were:

1. Size up
2. Crew/company leadership
3. Incident command
4. Strategy and tactics
5. Forms/records/reports

Feedback instrument question #12 In your opinion what should be the top 10 topics included in a training program for Acting Officers?

Of the same 22 possible response the top 10 chosen were:

1. Size up
2. Incident command
3. Crew/company leadership
4. Strategy and tactics
5. Department policies/SOGs
6. Handling problems and issues
7. Orientation/daily responsibilities
8. Incident scene and radio communications
9. Safety and health
10. Forms/records/reports

Feedback instrument question #13 Optional – department name and contact information

A total of 76 of the respondents provided their contact information. This will assist in the further development of the program. Many of the respondents also requested a copy of the completed ARP.

Research question #4 – what do the firefighters of the McHenry Township Fire Protection District believe to be important components of an acting company officer training program?

An internal feedback instrument was used to solicit information from the members of the department. A total of 48 (37.5% of all firefighters) responded during the allotted two week period. The following provides a summary of the most chosen responses to each question.

Feedback instrument question #1 How many years have you been in the fire service?

39.6% answered 11-20 years

Feedback instrument question #2 How long have you been a member of the McHenry Township Fire Protection District?

33.3% answered 11-20 years.

Feedback instrument question #3 Have you ever been assigned as an acting officer?

87.5% answered yes

Feedback instrument question #4 In your opinion would our department benefit from a training program for acting officers?

97.9% answered yes

Feedback instrument question #5 If yes, should the training be voluntary or mandatory?

56.3% answered that the training should be mandatory

Feedback instrument question #6 Which of the following methods should be used to conduct an acting officer training program?

There were six possible responses to this question. The responses in order of percentage were:

1. Practical training – 91.7%
2. Classroom – 89.6%
3. Mentoring – 66.7%
4. Ride-along time – 58.3%
5. State certification classes – 45.8%
6. On-line training – 25%

Feedback instrument question #7 In your opinion, what topics should be included in a training program for Acting Officers?

Of the 21 possible responses, the top five were:

1. Size up
2. Strategy and tactics
3. Fire alarms/installed systems
4. Crew/company leadership
5. Handling problems and issues

Feedback instrument question # 8 In your opinion, what should be the top 10 topics included in a training program for acting officers?

1. Size up
2. Strategy and tactics
3. Crew/company leadership
4. Fire behavior
5. Incident scene and radio communications
6. Fire alarms/installed systems
7. Building construction
8. Incident command
9. Department policies and SOGs
10. Handling problems and issues

Feedback instrument question #9 How long should an acting officer training program be?

42.6% answered 24-40 hours

Feedback instrument question #10 If a training program for acting officers was developed, would you be interested in participating in it?

89.4% answered yes

Feedback instrument question #11 If yes, what type of scheduling would work best for you?

60.9% answered that a combination of daytime, nighttime and weekend scheduling would work best

Feedback instrument question #12 – additional comments

Seven of the 48 respondents provided additional feedback. This included a request for hands-on training to be included, empowering actors the same as a company officer, keep in mind those members who work 40 hour regular jobs, and thank you for doing the survey.

Research question #4 – what do the officers of the McHenry Township Fire Protection District believe to be important components of an acting company officer training program?

There were 21 respondents which represents 80.7% of all department officers

Feedback instrument question #1 How many years have you been in the fire service?

The response to this question was equally split between the respondents. 33.3% answered 11-20 years, 21-30 years, and over 30 years.

Feedback instrument question #2 How long have you been a member of the McHenry Township Fire Protection District?

42.9% answered 11-20 years

Feedback instrument question #3 How long have you been an officer?

40% answered over 15 years

Feedback instrument question #4 In your opinion would our department benefit from a training program for acting officers?

100% answered yes

Feedback instrument question #5 If yes, should the training be voluntary or mandatory?

52.4% answered that the training should be voluntary

Feedback instrument question #6 Which of the following methods should be used to conduct an acting officer training program?

There were six possible responses to this question. The responses in order of percentage were:

1. Classroom – 90.5%
2. Practical training – 85.7%
3. Mentoring – 71.4%
4. Ride-along time – 61.9%
5. State certification courses – 52.4%
6. On-line training – 33.3%

Feedback instrument question #7 In your opinion, what topics should be included in a training program for Acting Officers?

Of the 21 possible responses, the top five were:

1. Fire alarms/installed systems – 90.5%
2. Incident command, strategy and tactics, (tie) - 85.7%
3. Size up, crew/company leadership, forms/records/reports, incident scene and radio communications (tie) – 81.0%
4. Orientation/daily responsibilities, fire behavior (tie) – 76.2%
5. Department policies/SOGs, safety and health (tie) – 57.1%

Feedback instrument question # 8 In your opinion, what should be the top 10 topics included in a training program for acting officers?

1. Incident command – 85.7%
2. Size up – 81%
3. Strategy and tactics – 81%
4. Fire alarms/installed systems – 76.2%
5. Crew/company leadership – 71.4%
6. Orientation/daily responsibilities – 66.7%
7. Incident scene and radio communications – 66.7%
8. Forms/records/reports – 66.7%
9. Fire behavior – 61.9%
10. Building construction – 57.1%

Feedback instrument question #9 How long should an acting officer training program be?

42.9% answered 24-40 hours

Feedback instrument question #10 Would you be interested in helping to develop and/or teach in a training program for acting officers?

71.4% answered yes

Feedback instrument question #11 additional comments

None of the respondents provided additional comments.

In summary the research led to the development of the draft document found in appendix E. Additional research results are incorporated into short and long term recommendations that will be submitted to the Fire Chief for possible review evaluation and implementation.

Discussion

The need to provide training to those who serve as acting company officers is essential. This is even more critical in volunteer or part-time departments such as the MTFPD. Due to the part-time nature of the organization the acting company officers may not have the frequency of being assigned to the position as would personnel in a career department.

The literature review identified the critical position that company officers or acting company officers hold within the fire service. Company officers deal first and foremost with both department members and the public that they serve. They are required to be incident commanders, coaches, public relations experts, and fire tacticians, and in the volunteer or part-time fire service, do it without the benefit of a permanently assigned crew. The knowledge, skills, and abilities that they are equipped with for the completion of these tasks are essential for the effectiveness of both the individual and the organization. It is also recognized outside the fire service, for example within the federal government, the important role of the first level supervisor.

A strong indicator for the need for acting officer training was revealed in the review of shift schedules for the period of September 6, 2011 to March 6, 2012. While not a scientific study, it identified that on any given day, the vast majority of the officer positions on a shift are filled by acting company officers.

The national standards, particularly NPFA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*, (NFPA, 2009) provide a strong reference for use in developing a training program for acting company officers. Equally important is the Fire Officer I certification curriculum from the Illinois OSFM. This certification program is the recognized benchmark within the state for company officers and serves as an important component for a fire

departments overall succession planning. Also valuable is the guidance from the IAFC *Officer Development Handbook*. Correlated to the NFPA 1021 standard, the four elements of learning, education, experience, and self-development, particularly at the supervising fire officer level, provide a roadmap for developing the acting officer program for the MTFPD (IAFC, 2010). Additional assistance comes in the form of the CPSE Fire Officer designation program. This program contains elements that can be incorporated not only into the acting officer training program but also into the regular training for Lieutenants and Captains and the department's overall succession plans.

The review of the MTFPD job description for Lieutenant identified 11 areas of responsibility. In addition all new Lieutenants are required to gain certification as a Fire Officer I within two years after appointment (MTFPD, 2010). This information will be valuable in matching the training program to the duties and expectations of the position.

The examples of acting officer and officer training programs submitted by 12 other fire departments provided additional value to the research. Minimum requirements, the use of task books, mentoring, formal course work, and written and/or practical testing were common elements of the programs.

The external feedback instrument sent through TRADENET to other fire departments identified that the majority of respondents both utilize acting officers and also provide training for the assignment. This training is required and most often provided before assignment as an acting officer. Common components included requiring state certification classes, the use of task books, tactical scenarios, classroom sessions, and mentoring. Specific topics of size up, incident command, company leadership, strategy and tactics, and department policies ranked high as areas to include in the training program.

The internal feedback instruments sent to the MTFPD officers and firefighters provided insight that will be critical to the development and implementation of the program. There were several areas of similarity between both groups. This included several years experience in both the fire service and the MTFPD, agreement that the department would benefit from a training program for acting company officers and that the ideal length of the program would be 24-40 hours. There was also general agreement that classroom sessions, practical training, a ride-along component, and mentoring were the best methods for delivering the program. This was followed closely by incorporating state certification classes. Both groups identified on-line training as the least preferred method for delivering the training.

In ranking the top 10 topics to be included in the training both officers and firefighters alike closely identified several areas. This included size up, leadership, strategy and tactics, building construction, communications, and fire alarms. There was more divergence in the areas of incident management, which was identified higher by the officers, and fire behavior which was identified higher by the firefighters.

The firefighter results identified that the vast majority have been assigned as an acting officer and the majority indicated interest in participating in the program. They also identified that a combination of day time, night time, and weekend sessions would best accommodate their participation on the program. Their top 10 list included department SOGs and handling problems and issues, both of which were not on the top 10 list for the officers.

Data from the department officers showed that the majority have been MTFPD officers for 15 years or more. Their top 10 topics included daily responsibilities and records and reports, both topics which did not make the top 10 list for the firefighters. The majority of the officers

also indicated an interest in assisting in the development and delivery of the training program. This involvement will be essential to the success of the training program.

One interesting difference between both groups was in regard to whether the program should be voluntary or mandatory. In this case a majority of the firefighters indicated that the program should be mandatory or required, and a majority of the officers believed that it should be voluntary.

The researcher's interpretation of the research is that the provision of a training program for acting officers needs to be a priority for the MTFPD. The national and state standards, the IAFC *Officer Development Handbook* as well as the examples provided by other fire departments all provide excellent references and benchmarks for program development. This coupled with the external and internal feedback instrument results provide a strong basis and template to work from in the development of a comprehensive program that meets the needs of the MTFPD.

The results of this ARP and implementing the recommendations will have organizational implications for the MTFPD. The time commitment for program development and the logistics of delivery to a large population of part-time personnel will be considerable. Another logistical item will be the availability of department firefighters to attend the training. Essential to success will be the designation of the training program as a priority for the organization. Equally important will be the involvement of other department members in the development and delivery of the training. Some of these challenges can be addressed by implementing the program as a series of steps that are accomplished over a multi-year timeframe.

There will also be financial implications in the form of costs for instructor pay, materials and supplies, and other items. It may be possible for some of this to be addressed through the

use of self-study assignments or utilizing on-shift instructors. There may be other financial implications, such as acting officer stipends, which are outside the scope of this ARP. The researcher believes strongly that while there will be challenges to accomplishing the training program, the long term benefit to the individuals who are asked to be acting company officers, the MTPFD, and the public that it serves will be worth the effort.

Recommendations

This ARP provides the structure for the development of an acting company officer training program for the MTPFD. There are several recommendations resulting from the research. These recommendations are grouped as immediate or short-term, and long term items. The immediate recommendation is the review of the draft program in appendix E.

Short term recommendations:

1. Create an acting officer committee whose members include representation from the current Acting Company Officers, Lieutenants, and the Training Division
2. Establish criteria for assignment as an Acting Company Officer
3. Establish initial list of Acting Company Officers
4. Address other implementation issues for formally creating the designation of Acting Company Officer , i.e. any compensation issues
5. Develop set of expectations and responsibilities of Acting Company Officers
6. Conduct a needs assessment that incorporates data from the internal feedback instruments, Illinois OSFM Fire Officer I, and applicable NFPA standards
7. Develop the specific modules of the training program
8. Determine logistics including scheduling

9. Conduct pilot course on a voluntary basis for those who currently are assigned as Acting Company Officers
10. Revise shift scheduling policy to place priority on assignment as an acting company officer to those who have completed the training program

Long term recommendations:

1. Phase in additional criteria for participation in acting company officer training program i.e. letter of interest, completion of Fire Officer I courses
2. Phase in requiring completion of Acting Company Officer training program prior to assignment as an Acting Company Officer
3. Phase in a re-certification requirement in order to maintain eligibility as an Acting Company Officer
4. Implement an initial assessment or testing process – both written and practical, in order to begin program
5. Formally create a scheduling slot for the officer position
6. Evaluate requiring completion of the training program as a prerequisite for the Lieutenant promotional exam process and/or award education points for program completion
7. Correlate completion of training program with provisional Fire Officer I requirements
8. Incorporate Acting Company Officers into the departments officer development program for promoted officers
9. Seek opportunities to partner with neighboring fire departments to create a multi-department or regional acting company officer training program
10. Create additional educational opportunities for acting company officers i.e. Blue Card training

11. Use training program as a model to develop programs for Acting Captain and Acting Battalion Chief

Future readers seeking to create an acting officer training program are encouraged to utilize the national standards and model programs as well as referencing state standards for Fire Officer certification. There are many outstanding training programs in use by fire departments throughout the United States that can also be used as a template for development. Utilizing all of these resources, along with input, feedback, and involvement of department personnel will help to ensure a program that meets the needs of the organization.

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Appendix A – Fire departments contacted/submitted program materials

Departments contacted through TRADENET email, other email, or direct phone contact and who provided information related to acting company officer or company officer training programs

Bolingbrook Fire Department, Illinois

Castle Rock Fire and Rescue Department, Colorado

Clovis Fire Department, California

Elgin Fire Department, Illinois

Fitchburg Fire Department, Wisconsin

Las Cruces Fire Department, New Mexico

Pasadena Fire Department, California

Prospect Heights Fire District, Illinois

Pullman Fire Department, Washington

Rogers Fire Department, Arkansas

South Metro Fire District, Colorado

Templeton Fire Department, California

Appendix B






Results of External Feedback Instrument sent to other fire departments

Department Survey





1. What is your rank?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Chief		10.8%	14
Deputy Chief/Assistant Chief		25.4%	33
Battalion Chief/District Chief/Shift Commander		14.6%	19
Lieutenant/Captain/Company Officer		40.8%	53
Firefighter		8.5%	11
Other (please specify)			12
answered question			130
skipped question			0
2. What type of department do you represent?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Volunteer/Paid On Call		9.2%	12
Career		53.8%	70
Combination		36.9%	48
Other (please specify)			2
answered question			130
skipped question			0


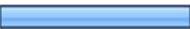
3. How many members does your department have?




		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 50		27.7%	36
50-100		37.7%	49
101-200		15.4%	20
201-500		5.4%	7
More than 500		13.8%	18
answered question			130
skipped question			0




4. Does your fire department use Acting Officers at the company level?





		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		89.2%	116
No		10.8%	14
answered question			130
skipped question			0




5. If yes, does the department provide training for Acting Officers?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		62.8%	76
No		37.2%	45
answered question			121
skipped question			9

6. If there is a training program do you believe that it is beneficial to your department?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		55.3%	68
No		7.3%	9
Not applicable - we do not have a training program		37.4%	46
answered question			123
skipped question			7





















7. If there is not a training program, do you believe that your department would benefit from one?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		44.2%	53
No		2.5%	3
Not applicable - we have a training program		53.3%	64
answered question			120
skipped question			10

8. If a training program is provided is it done:			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Prior to assignment as an acting officer		32.8%	42
After assignment as an acting officer		2.3%	3
Both		30.5%	39
Not applicable		34.4%	44
answered question			128
skipped question			2

9. Is the training program:			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Voluntary		18.8%	24
Required		47.7%	61
Not applicable		33.6%	43
answered question			128
skipped question			2


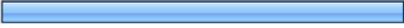













10. If your department provides training for Acting Officers what does it consist of? (please list)		Response Count
		73
answered question		73
skipped question		57








11. In your opinion, what topics should be included in a training program for Acting Officers? (check all that apply)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Orientation/Daily responsibilities		82.3%	107
Crew/company leadership		90.8%	118
Department policies/SOG's		84.6%	110
Forms/records/reports		86.9%	113
Handling problems and issues		79.2%	103
Fire behavior		65.4%	85
Building construction		62.3%	81
Fire alarms/installed systems		55.4%	72
Size-up		93.1%	121
Incident command		88.5%	115
NIMS/ICS		70.8%	92
Incident scene communications/radio communications		77.7%	101
Safety and health		74.6%	97
Mutual aid/automatic aid		54.6%	71
Strategy and tactics		87.7%	114
Conducting crew/company training		66.2%	86
Community relations/public education		56.2%	73
Hazardous materials		47.7%	62
Special teams incidents		38.5%	50
EMS/Mass casualty incidents		46.2%	60

2 in - 2 out / rapid intervention		64.6%	84
Ride-along time including commanding actual incidents		56.9%	74
Other (please specify)			21
answered question			130
skipped question			0

12. In your opinion, what should be the TOP 10 topics included in a training program for Acting Officers?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Orientation/Daily responsibilities		63.3%	81
Crew/company leadership		78.9%	101
Department policies/SOG's		71.9%	92
Forms/records/reports		53.1%	68
Handling problems and issues		64.8%	83
Fire behavior		42.2%	54
Building construction		41.4%	53
Fire alarms/installed systems		21.1%	27
Size-up		82.0%	105
Incident command		82.0%	105
NIMS/ICS		32.0%	41
Incident scene communications/radio communications		53.9%	69
Safety and health		53.9%	69
Mutual aid/automatic aid		17.2%	22
Strategy and tactics		78.9%	101

Conducting crew/company training		44.5%	57
Community relations/public education		17.2%	22
Hazardous materials		13.3%	17
Special teams incidents		7.0%	9
EMS/Mass casualty incidents		13.3%	17
2 in - 2 out / rapid intervention		36.7%	47
Ride-along time including commanding actual incidents		35.9%	46

Other (please specify) 4

answered question	128
skipped question	2

13. Optional - Department name and contact information.

	Response Count
	76
answered question	76
skipped question	54

Appendix C

Results of Internal Feedback Instrument sent to MTFPD Firefighters



McHenry Firefighter





1. How many years have you been in the fire service?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 5 years		4.2%	2
5-10 years		22.9%	11
11-20 years		39.6%	19
21-30 years		20.8%	10
over 30 years		12.5%	6
answered question			48
skipped question			0

2. How long have you been a member of the McHenry Township Fire Protection District?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 5 years		16.7%	8
5-10 years		22.9%	11
11-20 years		33.3%	16
21-30 years		16.7%	8
over 30 years		10.4%	5
answered question			48
skipped question			0




3. Have you ever been assigned as an acting officer?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		87.5%	42
No		12.5%	6
answered question			48
skipped question			0






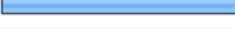
4. In your opinion, would our department benefit from a training program for acting officers?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		97.9%	47
No		2.1%	1
answered question			48
skipped question			0






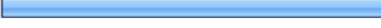
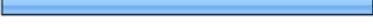
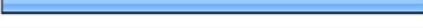

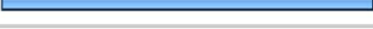



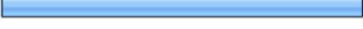
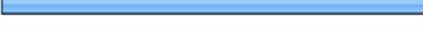





5. If yes, should the training be voluntary or required?


		Response Percent	Response Count
Voluntary		41.7%	20
Required		56.3%	27
Not applicable - I do not believe a program is needed		2.1%	1
answered question			48
skipped question			0

6. Which of the following methods should be used to conduct an acting officer training program? (check all that apply)

















		Response Percent	Response Count
Classroom		89.6%	43
On-line (i.e. Target Safety)		25.0%	12
Practical training		91.7%	44
Ride-along time		58.3%	28
Mentoring		66.7%	32
State certification classes		45.8%	22
Other (please specify)			5
answered question			48
skipped question			0






**7. In your opinion, what topics should be included in a training program for Acting Officers?
(check all that apply)**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Orientation/Daily responsibilities		50.0%	24
Crew/company leadership		81.3%	39
Department policies/SOG's		70.8%	34
Forms/records/reports		62.5%	30
Handling problems and issues		79.2%	38
Fire behavior		75.0%	36
Building construction		72.9%	35
Fire alarms/installed systems		83.3%	40
Size-up		89.6%	43
Incident command		72.9%	35
NIMS/ICS		37.5%	18
Incident scene communications/radio communications		77.1%	37
Safety and health		52.1%	25
Mutual aid/automatic aid		70.8%	34
Strategy and tactics		83.3%	40
Conducting crew/company training		54.2%	26
Community relations/public education		31.3%	15
Hazardous materials		37.5%	18
Special teams incidents		35.4%	17
EMS/Mass casualty incidents		54.2%	26






2 in - 2 out / rapid intervention		58.3%	28
Other (please specify)			3
answered question			48
skipped question			0

8. In your opinion, what should be the TOP 10 topics included in a training program for Acting Officers?




		Response Percent	Response Count
Orientation/Daily responsibilities		39.6%	19
Crew/company leadership		81.3%	39
Department policies/SOG's		50.0%	24
Forms/records/reports		37.5%	18
Handling problems and issues		47.9%	23
Fire behavior		79.2%	38
Building construction		62.5%	30
Fire alarms/installed systems		64.6%	31
Size-up		85.4%	41
Incident command		56.3%	27
NIMS/ICS		14.6%	7
Incident scene communications/radio communications		64.6%	31
Safety and health		43.8%	21
Mutual aid/automatic aid		43.8%	21
Strategy and tactics		81.3%	39
Conducting crew/company training		31.3%	15

Community relations/public education		16.7%	8
Hazardous materials		12.5%	6
Special teams incidents		8.3%	4
EMS/Mass casualty incidents		35.4%	17
2 in - 2 out / rapid intervention		45.8%	22
Other (please specify)			1
answered question			48
skipped question			0





9. How long should an acting officer training program be?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 8 hours		2.1%	1
8-24 hours		10.6%	5
24-40 hours		42.6%	20
over 40 hours		12.8%	6
Not sure		31.9%	15
answered question			47
skipped question			1

10. If a training program for acting officers was developed, would you be interested in participating in it?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		89.4%	42
No		4.3%	2
Not sure		6.4%	3
answered question			47
skipped question			1

11. If yes, what type of scheduling would work best for you?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Day time		17.4%	8
Night time		15.2%	7
Weekend		6.5%	3
Combination		60.9%	28
answered question			46
skipped question			2

12. Additional comments

	Response Count
	7
answered question	7
skipped question	41

Appendix D

Results of Internal Feedback Instrument sent to MTFPD Officers





McHenry Officer




1. How many years have you been in the fire service?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 5 years		0.0%	0
5-10 years		0.0%	0
11-20 years		33.3%	7
21-30 years		33.3%	7
over 30 years		33.3%	7
answered question			21
skipped question			0

2. How long have you been a member of the McHenry Township Fire Protection District?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 5 years		4.8%	1
5-10 years		0.0%	0
11-20 years		42.9%	9
21-30 years		28.6%	6
over 30 years		23.8%	5
answered question			21
skipped question			0



3. How long have you been an officer?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 5 years		25.0%	5
5-10 years		15.0%	3
10-15 years		20.0%	4
Over 15 years		40.0%	8
answered question			20
skipped question			1







4. In your opinion, would our department benefit from a training program for acting officers?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		100.0%	21
No		0.0%	0
answered question			21
skipped question			0






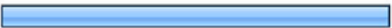














5. If yes, should the training be voluntary or required?


		Response Percent	Response Count
Voluntary		52.4%	11
Required		47.6%	10
Not applicable - I do not believe a program is needed		0.0%	0
answered question			21
skipped question			0

6. Which of the following methods should be used to conduct an acting officer training program? (check all that apply)









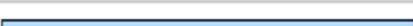







		Response Percent	Response Count
Classroom		90.5%	19
On-line (i.e. Target Safety)		33.3%	7
Practical training		85.7%	18
Ride-along time		61.9%	13
Mentoring		71.4%	15
State certification courses		52.4%	11
	Other (please specify)		1
answered question			21
skipped question			0





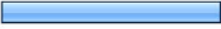
**7. In your opinion, what topics should be included in a training program for Acting Officers?
(check all that apply)**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Orientation/Daily responsibilities		76.2%	16
Crew/company leadership		81.0%	17
Department policies/SOG's		57.1%	12
Forms/records/reports		81.0%	17
Handling problems and issues		61.9%	13
Fire behavior		76.2%	16
Building construction		66.7%	14
Fire alarms/installed systems		90.5%	19
Size-up		81.0%	17
Incident command		85.7%	18
NIMS/ICS		42.9%	9
Incident scene communications/radio communications		81.0%	17
Safety and health		57.1%	12
Mutual aid/automatic aid		85.7%	18
Strategy and tactics		85.7%	18
Conducting crew/company training		47.6%	10
Community relations/public education		28.6%	6
Hazardous materials		38.1%	8
Special teams incidents		42.9%	9
EMS/Mass casualty incidents		52.4%	11





2 in - 2 out / rapid intervention		42.9%	9
Other (please specify)			0
answered question			21
skipped question			0

8. In your opinion, what should be the TOP 10 topics included in a training program for Acting Officers?



		Response Percent	Response Count
Orientation/Daily responsibilities		66.7%	14
Crew/company leadership		71.4%	15
Department policies/SOG's		42.9%	9
Forms/records/reports		66.7%	14
Handling problems and issues		38.1%	8
Fire behavior		61.9%	13
Building construction		57.1%	12
Fire alarms/installed systems		76.2%	16
Size-up		81.0%	17
Incident command		85.7%	18
NIMS/ICS		28.6%	6
Incident scene communications/radio communications		66.7%	14
Safety and health		47.6%	10
Mutual aid/automatic aid		33.3%	7
Strategy and tactics		81.0%	17
Conducting crew/company training		38.1%	8

Community relations/public education		9.5%	2
Hazardous materials		9.5%	2
Special teams incidents		23.8%	5
EMS/Mass casualty incidents		23.8%	5
2 in - 2 out / rapid intervention		42.9%	9
Other (please specify)			0
answered question			21
skipped question			0

9. How long should an acting officer training program be?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 8 hours		0.0%	0
8-24 hours		28.6%	6
24-40 hours		42.9%	9
Over 40 hours		14.3%	3
Not sure		14.3%	3
answered question			21
skipped question			0

10. Would you be interested in helping to develop and/or teach in a training program for acting officers?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		71.4%	15
No		28.6%	6
answered question			21
skipped question			0

11. Additional comments

	Response Count
	0
answered question	0
skipped question	21

Appendix E

Draft Acting Company Officer Program




McHenry Township Fire Protection District
Acting Company Officer Program



McHenry Township Fire Protection District
Acting Company Officer Program



	McHenry Township Fire Protection District	
	Category	Title
	Administration	Acting Company Officer
	Policy # DRAFT	Issued: DRAFT

Subject: Acting Company Officer

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to define the process for personnel to participate as an Acting Company Officer within the McHenry Township Fire Protection District.

Scope: This policy applies to all uniformed members of the McHenry Township Fire Protection District who request to be assigned as an Acting Company Officer as of ___(date)____. Until ___(date)____ this program is optional for personnel who were assigned as Acting Company Officers prior to ___(date)____.

Definition:

Acting Company Officer

An Acting Company Officer is an individual (Firefighter/EMT or Firefighter/Paramedic) who is scheduled and assigned the temporary duty of being the officer in charge of a crew. This does not include short-term situations occurring during a particular shift (i.e. during officer meetings or training, special events) or during POC callback.

Policy

Criteria for assignment as an Acting Company Officer

- Minimum of two (2) years as a MTFPD firefighter
- Certified Basic Firefighter
- Certified EMT-B or EMT-Paramedic
- Written recommendation of Team Officer
- Recommendation of Battalion Chiefs
- Individuals who have not been assigned as an Acting Officer prior to ___(date)____ have the following additional requirement:
 - Letter of interest to their Team Officer. This letter is to include why they seek to be assigned as an Acting Company Officer and that they will be participating in the next Lieutenant promotional process.

Responsibilities

Acting Company Officers have the same daily responsibilities and duties as a promoted Lieutenant. Final authority however resides with the officer corps.

Acting Company Officer Academy (ACOA)

The ACOA consists of eight (8) modules of classroom training. The scheduling of specific modules will be established each year by the Training Division with multiple sessions planned for each module.

Satisfactory completion of each module is required in order to complete the program.

Supervised Field experience

Personnel who are required to complete the ACOA will also be required to completed Supervised Field Experience. This will be performed under the supervision of a promoted Lieutenant or Captain (mentor). During this time personnel can function as the leader of the crew. This involves directing the crew in accordance with department policy/SOG and in accordance with the MTFPD Work Experience Document.

Each individual participating in the program must complete _____ hours of supervised field experience. During these hours the specific practical skills identified in the Acting Officer Taskbook must be completed.

The individual is responsible to complete the MTFPD Acting Officer Work Experience Document at the end of each field experience period. A FireHouse training report is to also be completed. The individual is responsible to maintain all documentation related to the program.

Individuals will accrue hour-for-hour field experience while functioning as the crew leader. These can be applied towards the field experience requirement for OSFM Fire Officer I certification.

Expectations during Supervised Field Experience

Officer (mentor)

- The officer maintains ultimate authority and responsibility for the crew
- The officer maintains a supervisory role while the candidate is leading the crew
- The officer outlines their expectations as to the role the candidate will fulfill during certain types of situations or incidents
- The officer may allow the candidate to function as the supervisor of the crew during emergency situations based on:
 - The candidate's experience and proven abilities
 - The candidate's progression within the program
 - The officer's experience with the candidate

- The officer is expected to maintain close supervision of the candidate and ensure that their decisions and actions are appropriate
- The officer is expected to continually evaluate the incident and the candidate's on-going ability to handle the situation
- The officer is expected to provide appropriate feedback to the candidate at the conclusion of each mentoring period

Candidate

- The candidate is expected to function as the supervisor/leader of the crew
- The candidate is expected to complete and maintain all documentation related to the program
- The candidate is expected to relinquish leadership of the crew when directed by the officer or when faced with a situation that they are unprepared to handle
- Work within the parameters of department policies/SOGs and the program
- Seek and be receptive to input, feedback, and constructive criticism from the officer

Certified Acting Company Officer

Once the candidate has completed all classroom and field experience requirements they will be designated as a certified Acting Company Officer.

By the order of: _____

Fire Chief

Date: DRAFT



McHenry Township Fire Protection District
Acting Company Officer Academy (ACOA)

<u>Modules</u>	<u>Hours</u>
1. Orientation/Responsibilities Duties of an Acting Company Officer	3
2. Department organization Policy & SOG Records & Reports	3
3. Crew Leadership	6
4. Incident Management System Size up Radio Communications	6
5. Fire Behavior Building Construction	3
6. Fire Alarm Installed Systems	3
7. Strategy and Tactics Engine Operations Truck Operations SRT Operations EMS Operations	9
8. Tactical Scenarios Final Evaluation	3
Total hours	36



**MCHENRY TOWNSHIP FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
ACTING OFFICER TRAINING PROGRAM
WORK EXPERIENCE DOCUMENT**

Name: _____

Date of work experience: _____

Shift / Assignment: _____

_____ Hrs to _____ Hrs TOTAL Hrs: _____

Number of Personnel Under Your Supervision: _____

Station Assignment: _____

Apparatus Assigned: _____

Supervising Officer: _____

During your shift, please indicate your work experience by checking each area of responsibility that was completed.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Yes	No	RESPONSIBILITIES	Yes	No
Monitored completion of all assigned tasks and duties including apparatus, tools and equipment, and station			FireHouse reports completed # of reports completed _____ _____ required		
Conducted / supervised company level training			Supervised / direct members during EMS emergency responses # of times _____ _____ required		
Notified supervising officer of any unusual occurrence or circumstances			Supervised / direct members during non EMS emergency responses (i.e. still alarms, general alarms, etc) # of times _____ _____ required		
Communicated with Battalion Chief on routine duty functions			Conducted size-up at FIRE / EMS incident # of times _____ _____ required _____ of which must be over the air and in compliance with SOG# 301.01		
Documented any injuries or accident reports on required forms			Lead fire prevention activities or public education/public relations events, etc) _____ required		
Other routine reports completed <i>Describe reports:</i>			Function in a leadership position during a special operations incident / training event (i.e. TRT, Haz-Mat, Dive, Fire Investigations)		

Identify the emergency incidents where your decision-making was applied to incident scene operations: *Describe supervisory related actions performed.*

Did you conduct any training? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please describe your role and the specifics of the training session::

During your shift, describe any personnel issues that you had to confront and the decisions you made to resolve the issue: ☐ Yes ☐ No

During your shift, were there any incidents, situations or problems that could have developed into bigger issues without your intervention? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Please report on your intervention.

Other duties or supplemental information:

The Acting Officer candidate will submit their work experience documentation to their assigned supervisor at the completion of shift.

Signature of Officer Candidate: _____
Signature Date


SUPERVISING OFFICER ATTESTATION STATEMENT:

I have reviewed the work experience document with this officer candidate and made recommendations where applicable. By my signature I attest I had direct supervision of the officer trainee confirm the above statements are true and accurate.

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Completed forms are to be maintained by the Officer Candidate until all job performance requirements have been met. Once all requirements have been completed the entire packet of completed forms are to be forwarded to the Training Division

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION



AWARDED TO
[Name]

**For successful completion of the McHenry Township Fire Protection District
Acting Company Officer Program**

Awarded this ____ day of _____, 20__

Fire Chief